Winter 1989 Volume 4 Number 1

Special Issue Proposed for 1989

Restoring Planet Earth

Whole Earth is proposing a new project for 1989: a special issue of the magazine titled *Restoration: The Science of Restoring the Natural Environment.* We'd like to invite your participation as patrons of this project; we need seed money to make this idea grow.

With 1988's three special projects now behind us (*Signal, The Fringes of Reason,* and *The Electronic Whole Earth Catalog*) we've used these short winter days to clear the decks and cast about for the next worthy project. What's emerged is the subject of planet healing — more specifically the practice of ecological restoration around the world. David Wingate's tale of saving a bird species and restoring an island in Bermuda (the cover story of the Fall '88 *Whole Earth Review*) is but one of many fascinating and positive stories waiting to be told.

Ecological restoration is a young science, full of first-time attempts, plenty of mistakes, and a learning curve that is steep. It's an unpublicized subject rich with potential and, since most of the problems we've been pointing at during the past twenty odd years have not gone away, one that is sorely needed. Because the bad news isn't about to lessen, the overload/burnout factor becomes crucial for all of us, and real-life antidotes to despair are important to share. Our special issue, *Restoration* , will offer our readers a catalog of small-step success stories.

There are people all over the planet learning how to heal the ecological webs that sustain us. They are rebuilding marshes, restoring streambanks and spawning grounds in the logged-out woods, getting grass to grow next to abandoned smelters, and planting trees to halt the spread of deserts. Many of these projects are small and very local. While it is

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The WELL Staff: David Hawkins, Robin Gail Ramsey, Cliff Figallo, John Coate.

The WELL Wins Community Journalism Award

The Media Alliance bestowed its Meritorious Achievement Award for Community Journalism on The WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link). The WELL is a unique online community of subscribers who exchange information and opinion on a wide variety of topics (see WER #60 for John Coate's article " A Village Called the WELL" for a fuller feeling of what it is).

What's this got to do with journalism you ask? Jon Carroll, a WELL subscriber and columnist for the *SF Chronicle*, put it this way: "It is possible to argue that what all these folks are doing is a kind of non-hierarchical, self-correcting journalism... the readers are the newspaper: its journalism by dialogue, not journalism by pronouncement."

The WELL has evolved into a successful business as well as community service and now actually makes a profit. There are about 2500 paying subscribers, about half of whom log in to the WELL in a given month. One third of these subscribers are outside the SF Bay Area, and access the WELL primarily through Compuserve's packet network.

Restoration (continued)

clear that nobody has ever repaired a natural system as well as Mother Nature evolved it in the first place, it is equally apparent that given half a chance, natural systems possess great potential for restoring themselves. The webs do knit back together, although we barely know how.

We think a special issue of *Whole Earth Review* devoted to the people working on these projects is important, and we are asking you now for financial support to make it happen. Since many of the doers in this field have dirty finger-nails, heads full of experience and little written down, seed money and lead-time for researching and gathering these stories is essential.

If this special issue is successful and eventually becomes a book, so much the better. By then it might well be 1990, twenty years since Earth Day, and a decade before the millennium. Showing people and organizations how to stop harming and start healing this old planet of ours seems to us like an appropriate subject for a book appearing that year.

Let us know what you think. If you know of restoration projects in your own neighborhoods, please let us know. Your ideas, intelligence and financial support are, as always, welcome. Send your tax-deductible contribution to Point Foundation, using the coupon next page. Think of it as a small stone that can make big ripples.

--- Richard Nilsen

Electronic Whole Earth Catalog Published

The Electronic Whole Earth Catalog, published by Brøderbund Software, hits the streets in February. The Catalog was featured at the recent MacWorld Expo in San Francisco.

The Electronic WEC is one of the first CD ROM products aimed at the general public (most of the others are vertically targeted toward specialized professional users). We don't, however, anticipate a sales landslide, since the CD players have only recently been introduced. Because our Catalog is built on Apple's HyperCard program, it can only be used on a Macintosh computer. Our best guess is that there are only several thousand Macintosh owners with CD drives out there right now, a fact we anticipated when we started the project. For us, the project was an excellent opportunity to pioneer a new publishing medium.

Brøderbund seems pleased with the product, which is their first CD ROM product as well. With all modesty, we print here a excerpt from a letter from Doug Carlston, President of Brøderbund:

> *"I just wanted to take a moment to express to you our recognition of and appreciation for the dedication and talent evinced by your staff in their work with us over the past nine months. As publishers we have worked with literally hundreds of development groups and individuals on a huge variety of projects. None has ever approached the* Electronic Whole Earth Catalog *project in size. And few of those developers have shown the professionalism and skill at turning out product that we have seen in Keith Jordan and everyone involved with him in creating this unprecedented compilation of images, data and sound... You have a terrific and unusual group assembled at Whole Earth. My thanks to all of you for your contributions."*

Restoration Pledge Restoration Pledge Restoration Pledge Restoration Pledge

YES, I want to help get the Special Issue on Restoration Ecology going!

Here is my tax-deductible contribution of

___$1,000 ___$500 ___$250 ___$100 ___Other $_____

Your Name_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

Make checks payable to: Point Foundation

Mail to: 27 Gate Five Road, Sausalito, CA 94965

Holiday Mailing Succeeds

The 1988 Holiday mailing, traditionally one of WER's main sources of income and new subscribers, was a smashing success. The mailing is sent to our house list of about 21,000 subscribers and recent expires.

This year, we gained 2,082 new subscribers, a big leap forward for us. In addition, we sold the following quantities of books and products: 114 *Essential Whole Earth Catalog*, 66 News That Stayed News, 4 Electronic Whole Earth Catalog CD and 316 *Signal*.. The total gross income was $ 47,987, almost twice that of the mailings in each of the previous two years.

Thank you for taking advantage of our gift offer and for your continuing support.

Unfulfilled Fulfillment

Our transition to in-house fulfillment continues to encounter rough going, primarily with regard to getting the readers sorted out into the right renewal groups. The problem stems from converting our database from the old system to the new one.

Soon we hope that this topic will disappear from this newsletter and that MacSUB will become the invisible hand guiding you to better service, rather than the malevolent demon mangling our data base that it now appears to be!

Better Service at a Lower Price

Whole Earth Review recently slashed its price for overseas airmail delivery from $16 to $8 per year. We passed on the postal savings we achieved directly to our readers. Bad business? - no, just part of our concept of reader service.

These savings were made possible by switching to the International Surface Air Lift (ISAL) service of the US Post Office. In the last few years, remailing services have begun airlifting mail in bulk to overseas entry points where it is remailed at cheaper surface rates in the local mailstream. ISAL is the Post Office version of this service. (and the cheapest one for us).

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